

✓  
mf

289936

**Latimer, Becky**

**From:** Latimer, Becky  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2020 2:10 PM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** 2019-281-S

Dear Marsheika Martin,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your Letter of Protest/Comments to the Public Service Commission of South Carolina. Your Letter of Protest/Comments will be placed in the Protest File of the Docket listed below and on the Commission's Website at [www.psc.sc.gov](http://www.psc.sc.gov).

- Docket No. 2019-281-S - Application of Palmetto Utilities, Incorporated for Adjustment (Increase) of Rates and Charges, Terms and Conditions, for Sewer Service Provided to Customers in Its Richland and Kershaw County Service Areas

A Protestant is an individual objecting on the ground of private or public interest to the approval of an Application, Petition, Motion or other matters which the Commission may have under consideration. A Protestant may offer sworn testimony but cannot cross-examine witnesses offered by other parties.

According to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, filing a Protest does not make you a Party of Record. A Protestant desiring to become an Intervenor (i.e., a Party of Record) in a proceeding before the Commission may file a Petition for Intervention within the time prescribed by the Commission.

You can follow this Docket and other daily filings made at the Commission by subscribing to the Commission's Email Subscriptions at this link: <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Web/Email>; or you can follow the individual Docket at the link listed below:

Docket No. 2019-281-S - Application of Palmetto Utilities, Incorporated for Adjustment (Increase) of Rates and Charges, Terms and Conditions, for Sewer Service Provided to Customers in Its Richland and Kershaw County Service Areas <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Web/Dockets/Detail/117238>

If we may be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,  
Becky Latimer

Public Service Commission of South Carolina  
101 Executive Center Dr., Suite 100  
Columbia, SC 29210



Phone: 803-896-5100  
Fax: 803-896-5199  
www.psc.sc.gov

Save as PDF file and Email form  
to: [contact@psc.sc.gov](mailto:contact@psc.sc.gov)

\* Required Fields

Date: \* 1-24-2020

Letter of Protest  
Docket No. 2019-281-S

**Protestant Information:**

Name \* Marsheika Genise Martin

Mailing Address \* \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip \* Columbia, SC \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**1. What is your connection or interest in this case? \* For example, are you a customer of the Company that is the subject of this pending proceeding? (This section must be completed. Attach additional information if necessary.)**

I am a customer residing in Richland County.

**2. Please give a concise statement of your protest. \* (This section must be completed. Attach additional information if necessary.)**

I protest the increase in our sewer bill because it is ALREADY HIGH ENOUGH and I struggle monthly to make my current payments. Check my payment history. I absolutely cannot afford to pay \$66.63 for SEWER and I am requesting that the increase do not be approved. I cannot even imagine how this would affect a senior citizen who already has to choose between groceries or a need to get their prescription filled. WE NEED A BREAK FROM ALL OF THESE UTILITY INCREASES.

**3. Do you wish to make an appearance at a hearing in this proceeding, if scheduled, and offer sworn testimony? \***

No I do not. I would pray our letters be sufficient enough to show that the majority of citizens highly are against the increase. I do not mind my name being shown on public record at all.

Signature Required:

Marsheika Martin



**Latimer, Becky**

---

**From:** Latimer, Becky  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2020, 2:08 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** 2019-281-S

Dear Lawanna Platts,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your Letter of Protest/Comments to the Public Service Commission of South Carolina. Your Letter of Protest/Comments will be placed in the Protest File of the Docket listed below and on the Commission's Website at [www.psc.sc.gov](http://www.psc.sc.gov).

- Docket No. 2019-281-S - Application of Palmetto Utilities, Incorporated for Adjustment (Increase) of Rates and Charges, Terms and Conditions, for Sewer Service Provided to Customers in Its Richland and Kershaw County Service Areas

A Protestant is an individual objecting on the ground of private or public interest to the approval of an Application, Petition, Motion or other matters which the Commission may have under consideration. A Protestant may offer sworn testimony but cannot cross-examine witnesses offered by other parties.

According to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, filing a Protest does not make you a Party of Record. A Protestant desiring to become an Intervenor (i.e., a Party of Record) in a proceeding before the Commission may file a Petition for Intervention within the time prescribed by the Commission.

You can follow this Docket and other daily filings made at the Commission by subscribing to the Commission's Email Subscriptions at this link: <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Web/Email>; or you can follow the individual Docket at the link listed below:

Docket No. 2019-281-S - Application of Palmetto Utilities, Incorporated for Adjustment (Increase) of Rates and Charges, Terms and Conditions, for Sewer Service Provided to Customers in Its Richland and Kershaw County Service Areas <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Web/Dockets/Detail/117238>

If we may be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,  
Becky Latimer





\* Required Fields

Date: \* 1/24/20

## Letter of Protest

Docket No. 2019-281-S

### Protestant Information:

Name \* Lawanna Platts

Mailing Address \*

City, State Zip \* Columbia, SC

Phone \*

E-mail

1. What is your connection or interest in this case? \* For example, are you a customer of the Company that is the subject of this pending proceeding? (This section must be completed. Attach additional information if necessary.)

I am a customer of palmetto utilities.

2. Please give a concise statement of your protest. \* (This section must be completed. Attach additional information if necessary.)

I am a disabled widow and single parent of 3 (One is special needs).

I am on a strict fixed income and simply can not afford another increase. This will be the second increase since I have been with this company.

3. Do you wish to make an appearance at a hearing in this proceeding, if scheduled, and offer sworn testimony? \*

I do not wish to give sworn testimony, but we all know that this 28% rate hike is simply ridiculous.

Signature Required





*The Public Service Commission  
State of South Carolina*

*Handwritten signature/initials*

COMMISSIONERS

Comer H. "Randy" Randall, Third District  
*Chairman*  
Florence P. Belser, Second District  
*Interim Vice Chairman*  
John E. "Butch" Howard, First District  
Thomas J. "Tom" Ervin, Fourth District  
Swain E. Whitfield, Fifth District  
Justin T. Williams, Sixth District  
G. O'Neal Hamilton, Seventh District

Jocelyn Boyd  
Chief Clerk/Executive Director  
Phone: (803) 896-5133  
Fax: (803) 896-5246

Administrative Department  
Phone: (803) 896-5100  
Fax: (803) 896-5246

January 27, 2020

Dear Calvin Smith

Blythewood, SC

Dear Calvin Smith,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your Letter of Protest/Comments to the Public Service Commission of South Carolina. Your Letter of Protest/Comments will be placed in the Protest File of the Docket listed below and on the Commission's Website at [www.psc.sc.gov](http://www.psc.sc.gov).

- Docket No. 2019-281-S - Application of Palmetto Utilities, Incorporated for Adjustment (Increase) of Rates and Charges, Terms and Conditions, for Sewer Service Provided to Customers in Its Richland and Kershaw County Service Areas

A Protestant is an individual objecting on the ground of private or public interest to the approval of an Application, Petition, Motion or other matters which the Commission may have under consideration. A Protestant may offer sworn testimony but cannot cross-examine witnesses offered by other parties.

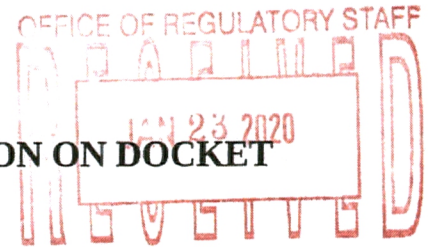
According to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, filing a Protest does not make you a Party of Record. A Protestant desiring to become an Intervenor (i.e., a Party of Record) in a proceeding before the Commission may file a Petition for Intervention within the time prescribed by the Commission.

You can follow this Docket and other daily filings made at the Commission by subscribing to the Commission's Email Subscriptions at this link: <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Web/Email>; or you can follow the individual Docket at the link listed below:

Docket No. 2019-281-S - Application of Palmetto Utilities, Incorporated for Adjustment (Increase) of Rates and Charges, Terms and Conditions, for Sewer Service Provided to Customers in Its Richland and Kershaw County Service Areas <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Web/Dockets/Detail/117238>

If we may be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,  
Becky Latimer



## **REQUEST TO ADDRESS PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ON DOCKET NUMBER 2019-281-S**

This communication is a request to address the docket issue noted above and not only deny the rate increase, but to rescind the approval of Docket No. 2017-228-S rates from Palmetto Utilities, Inc(hereinafter "The Company"). The request for rate increases is identical to the rate rationale employed by SCANA Corporation that was based on including capital costs for the defunct nuclear power plant that the SC Legislature rescinded the rates and legislated a rebate to customers. I will detail the issues with the rate structure approved by the Public Service Commission for Palmetto Utilities, Inc., plus offer a rational rate structure proposal.

### Issues with the approved rate structure in 2017-228-S and 2019-281-S

First, the rate request in both dockets were based on capital needs for expansion of The Company's facilities based on investment costs. Like SCANA Corp., this places the burden of providing Capital Investment on the rate payers. According to the SC State Legislature and basic accounting practice, this is unethical and illegal for the following reasons:

1. Capital investment is the sole responsibility of the owners of the corporation because they, and they alone, benefit from the increased capital worth of the business.
2. The corporation has a means to recover the investment made in capital improvements through depreciation which is deducted from profit before taxes—in this case millions of dollars in cash that came from the customers and goes into the stockholder equity account.
3. The ability of the stockholders to take tax free equity distributions from the equity account, while the customers who provided the capital gets no return or reimbursement for providing capital to The Company.
4. The total lack of transparency that a privately held monopoly corporation enjoys by not providing audited financial reports for review and auditing(basically a license to steal).

### Proposed Rate Structure Rationale to Provide Reasonable Cost to Customers and a Profit to The Corporation

1. Develop a rate structure that pays for operating expenses plus a reasonable profit margin to ensure the customer pays a fair share of the operating costs.
2. Base this rate on operating costs, including payroll, overhead, benefits, maintenance, non-capital equipment costs, quality control, government compliance, and other expenses required to process the effluent and meet the needs of the customers in accordance with government regulations.
3. Develop a process to monitor operating costs and communicate any future rate increase requests to the customers in advance.

### Remedial Action Plan for PUC

As a privately owned monopoly, The Company's customers have no recourse. The only venue with power to control rates and services is the SC Public Utilities Commission. In order to ensure due

diligence to protect The Company's customers and ensure the rate structure is fair for both parties, we would suggest the following.

1. Require The Company to provide five years of audited financial reports and tax returns to provide the information to determine the extent of the abuse caused by rates based on Capital costs has occurred and if the stockholders have enriched themselves through unfair practices like equity withdrawals akin to the bonuses taken by the SCANA executives that are now in litigation.
2. Evaluate the true rate relevant costs of doing business by determining the average per customer cost for processing waste to meet EPA requirements and deliver clean effluent to the discharge channels
3. Determine a reasonable profit level and develop a rate structure that provides a reasonable return based on water usage in normal circumstances or on a basis of size of household, tax base, or other equitable method to ensure customers pay their fair share.
4. Determine if the rate structure currently in effect has been abused and direct The Company to rebate excessive charges over three years via annual rebates or a monthly credit to the new rate structure to ensure Customers are remunerated for the overcharges.
5. Establish a committee of PUC members to serve as an ombudsman to ameliorate disputes between The Company and its customers and establish quarterly schedule so the customers have access to the PUC.
6. Make certain that members of the PUC are independent of all regulated companies and their business interests to ensure impartiality in rate reviews and disputes.
7. Appoint a Customer based council to work with the PUC so Customers have a voice in the rate analytical process and can provide feedback on the impacts of decisions on the consumers.
8. Review other utility provider rate structures to make sure this Capital based rate structure does not exist within the purview of the PUC.
9. Develop a method to provide customers with shares in The Company commensurate with thie contribution that would be based on the total net equity in proportion to the present owners less any equity withdrawals. Shares would be distributed based on invoices paid by customers and receive full dividends on an equal basis as the original owners.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the evidence above. We look forward to implementation of the suggested processes and procedures to avoid the necessity of SC Legislative action or a class action lawsuit as was necessary in the SCANA debacle.

Sincerely,

Calvin J. Smith

Blythewood, SC



**Easterling, Deborah**

---

**From:** Watts, Victoria  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2020 9:31 AM  
**To:** PSC\_Contact  
**Subject:** Consumer Complaint/Protests  
**Attachments:** Calvin Smith 1.27.20.pdf

Attached please find the letter of Calvin Smith which we received in our office on Thursday. Please post on DMS at your earliest convenience.

*Victoria L. Watts*

Paralegal  
SC Office of Regulatory Staff  
1401 Main Street, Suite 850  
Columbia, SC 29201  
Email: [vwatts@ors.sc.gov](mailto:vwatts@ors.sc.gov)  
Tel: (803) 737-0868

The information transmitted is intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential, proprietary, and/or privileged material. Any review, transmission, dissemination or other use of, or taking any action in reliance upon this information, by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. If you received this in error, please contact the sender and delete the material from all computers. Thank you